



Achieving A Decision

General Neal



Achieving A Decision

MSTP

How do you do it?

- There is no easy answer; each battle will have its own unique answers
- “No formula, process, acronym, or buzzword can provide the answer. Rather, the answer lies in the ability of the commander to **understand** the battlefield and act decisively.”

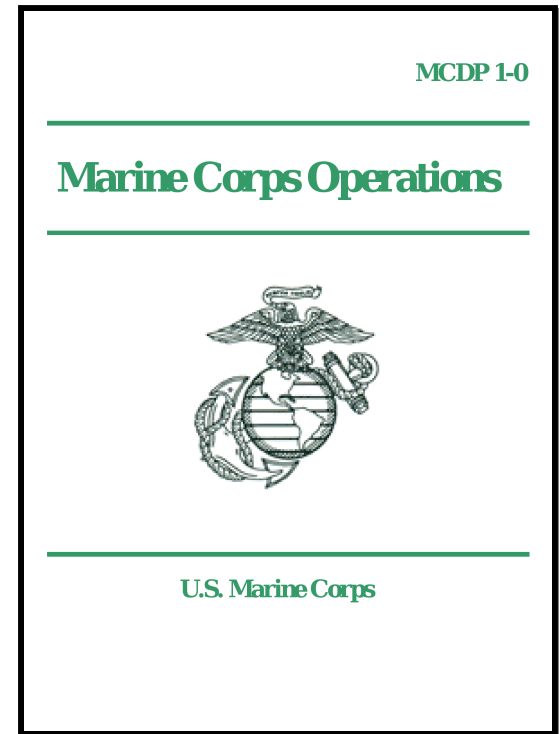
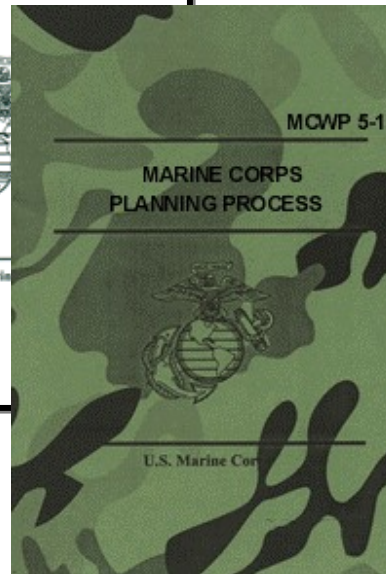
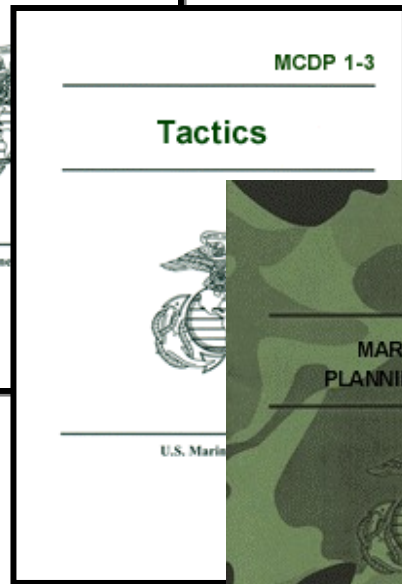
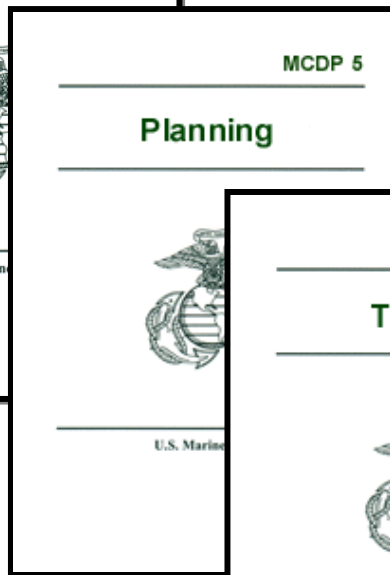
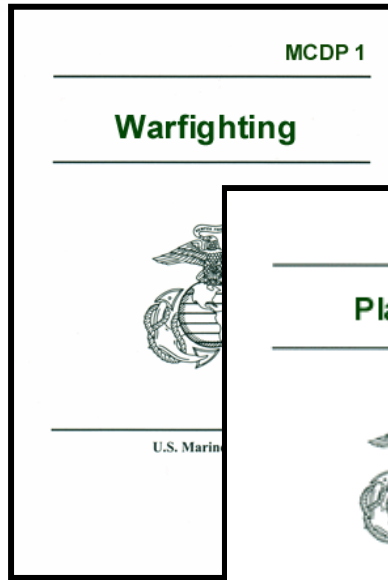
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The “Art of War”

References



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Purpose

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- Understand “achieving a decision”
- Understand the **essential** Commander’s role in achieving a decision
- Understand “achieving a decision” in the context of planning and execution

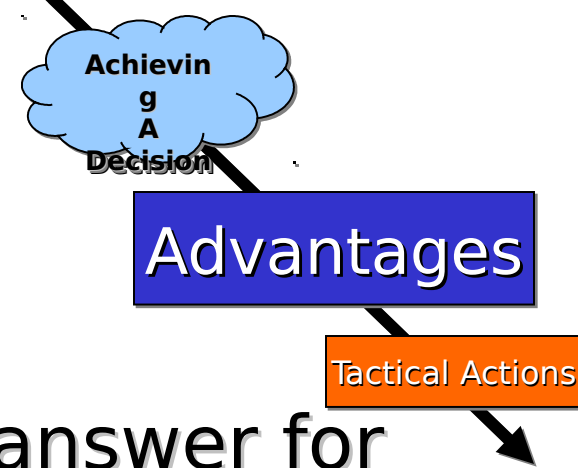


Achieving a Decision

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- A clear victory
 - No BCS computer rankings
 - No sudden death OT
 - No dangling chads
- The result of gaining and exploiting advantages through decisive action

Advantages



- Something the enemy has no answer for
 - At least for now
- Putting him on the defense
 - Ceding the initiative
- Causing him to compensate
 - Potentially creating a “result larger than itself”

*“The essence of maneuver is taking action to generate and exploit some kind of an **advantage**...”*

—MCDP 1, Warfighting



Advantages

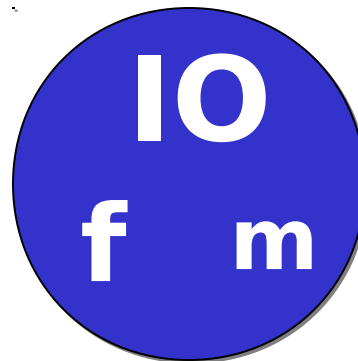
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- Will vary by threat and type of operation
- Affecting the roles of the big three:
 - Fires, Maneuver, and IO

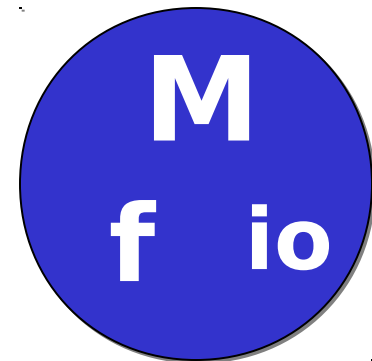
Korea



Somalia



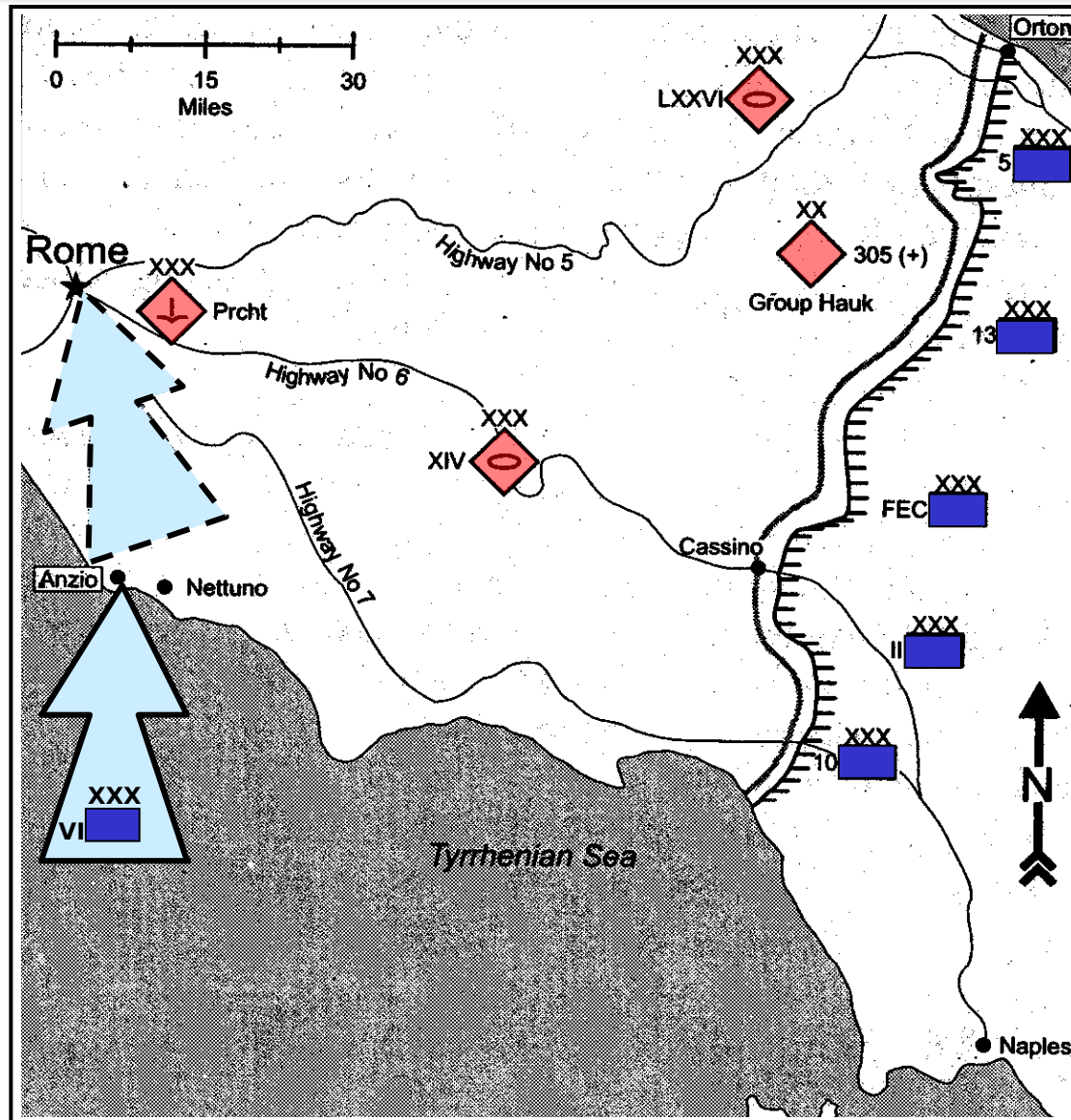
OIF



Anzio, 1944



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Operation Shingle



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- General Alexander, Commander, 15th Army Group
Operation Instruction: *“to cut the enemy’s main communications in the Alban Hills area southwest of Rome, and to threaten the rear of XIV German Corps.”*
- General Clark, Commander, Fifth Army
Operation Directive: *“to seize and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio and advance on the Alban Hills.”*

“Attack in the direction of the Alban Hills.”

“Don’t stick your neck out the way I did at Salerno.”

Advice



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- General Patton's advice to General Lucas, VI Corps Commander:



"John, there is no one in the Army I'd hate to see killed as much as you, but you can't get out of this alive. Of course you might be badly wounded. No one ever blames a wounded general!"

- General Patton's advice to General Lucas's aide:

"Look here, if things get too bad, shoot the old man in the backside, but don't you dare kill the old fellow!"

Inchon



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“Most urgently request reconsideration of decision with reference to 1st Marine Division. It is an absolutely vital development to accomplish a **decisive stroke** and if not made available will necessitate a much more costly and longer effort both in blood and expense. It is essential the Marine Division arrive by 10 September 1950...”

Gen MacArthur to JCS

Inchon



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“Operation planned mid-September is amphibious landing of a two division corps in rear of enemy forces in conjunction with attack from south by Eighth Army. I am firmly convinced that early and strong effort behind his front will sever his main lines of communication and enable us to deliver a **decisive** and crushing blow...”

Gen MacArthur to JCS





Achieving A Decision

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- What do these examples tell us about achieving a decision?
- Achieving a decision is not easy!
 - An indecisive battle...
- To be decisive, a battle or engagement must lead directly to winning the campaign as a whole.

“These tactical battles were planned for their overall operational and strategic effects.”

MCDP 1-3

Decisive Actions



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- Underwrites the endstate
 - A result larger than itself
- Causes the enemy to:
 - Adopt a COA favorable to us
 - Lose the will to fight
 - Lose the physical ability to resist
- Not always the event you planned for
- Will change as the situation changes
 - Be flexible and ready to exploit the unforeseen



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Operational Design

Visualize

Describe

Direct

METT-T
Decisive/Shaping
Sustainment

CBAE
&
Guidance

Situational
Understanding

Battlefield Framework

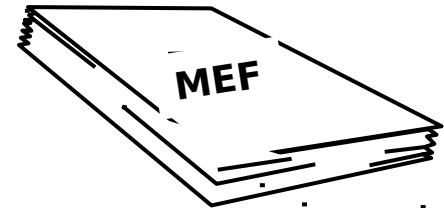
Deep, Close, Rear
(Single Battle)
Main Effort
Reserve
Security

Warfighting Functions
Integrated Planning

OPORD



Battle Staff and OPT



Conceptual

Functional

Detailed

The Planning
Hierarchy

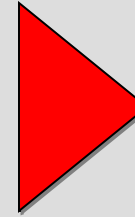


Execution

Situational Understanding

Receipt of
Mission

- Situational Awareness
CBAE-Commander's Orientation
 - HHQ Mission & Intent
 - Staff Input
 - METT-T
 - Military Judgment



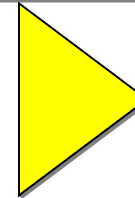
Commander's
Situational
Understanding

- Commander's Visualization
Initial Guidance
 - Commander's Intent
 - Battlespace Analysis
 - COG Analysis
 - CCIR



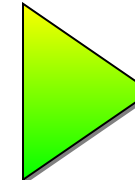
Staff Orientation

- Mission Analysis
 - Mission Statement
 - Refined Intent and Guidance
 - Resource Shortfalls



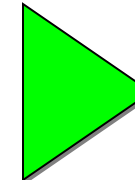
Commander's
Planning
Guidance

- Deliberate Planning (COA DEV)
 - Decisive, shaping, sustaining actions
 - Battlespace Framework
 - Warfighting Functions



Orders
Development

- Execution
 - Seeing/gaining an advantage
 - METT-T
 - Adapting - Improvising



Achieving a
Decision



Achieving A Decision

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Pre-OPT

- Receipt of Mission
 - Provides Situational Awareness
 - Commander to Commander Interface
- CBAE (seeking understanding)
 - HHQ Guidance
 - Staff interface
 - METT-T
- Visualization (Seeking Advantage)
 - Translating operational requirements of HHQ into tactical guidance for subordinates and staff

Commander's Concerns



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- What is the enemy capable of doing?
- What will the enemy do?
- What is the enemy's purpose?
- What are the enemy's strengths?
- What are the enemy's weaknesses?
- How am I going to achieve a decision?
- How do I coordinate the actions of my subordinates toward achieving a decision?

Commander's Concerns



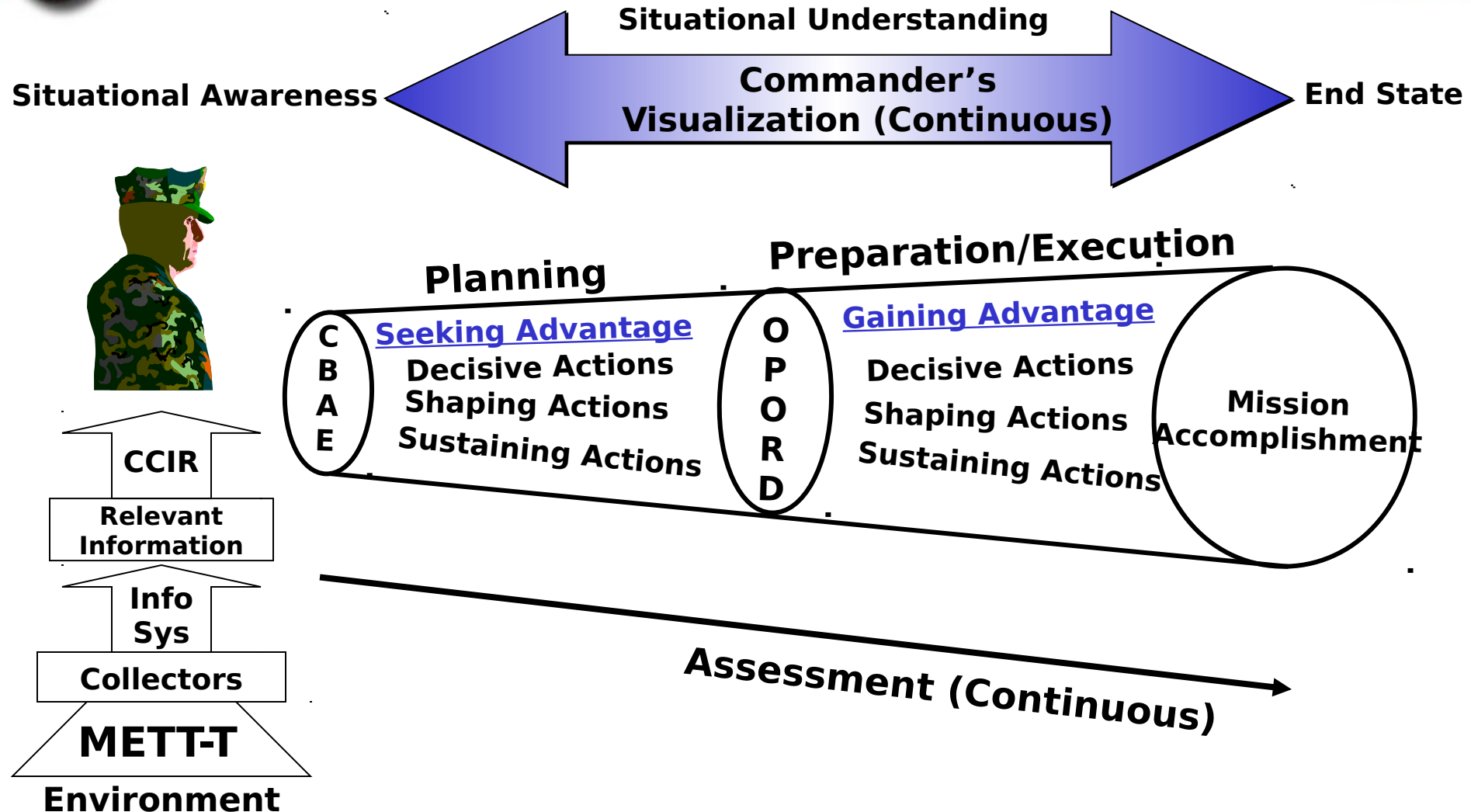
MSTP

- What have I forgotten?
- What do I think is so that isn't so?
- What don't I know that I don't know?
- What can I do to exploit advantage?
- Where should I be focusing my combat power?
- Do I have the right forces and resources?
- How can I do it without culminating?
- How do I recognize success or failure?

Visualization



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Achieving A Decision

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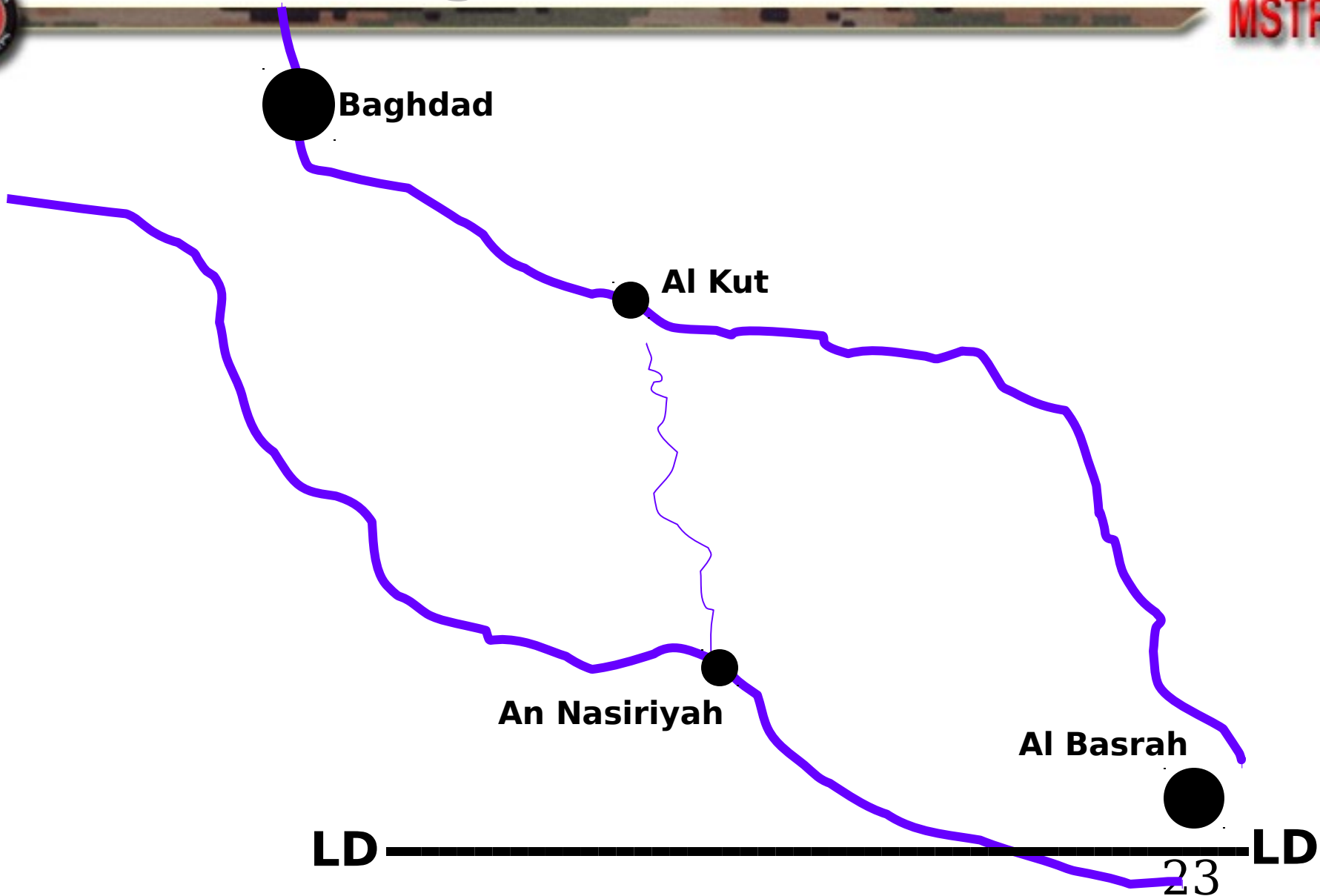
Pre-OPT

- Initial Guidance
 - Commander Orientation
 - His visualization expressed through the products of CBAE
 - A reflection of the commander's situational understanding as a result of CBAE and his experience, education, training, and judgment
 - Provided to staff & MSCs prior to Mission Analysis

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Initial Orientation

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CBAE Results

- Battlespace
 - Is the battlespace appropriate to the MAGTF's capabilities?
 - What about my area of influence, do I have it right?
- COGs-CVs
 - What are the enemy & friendly COGs?
 - Just as importantly, what are the enemy and friendly CVs?
- Intent
 - What are the effects necessary to achieve a decision?
- CCIR
 - What do we not know that will help us leverage our advantages?

Situational Understanding

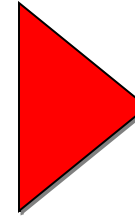


Receipt of Mission

- Situational Awareness

CBAE-Commander's Orientation

- HHQ Mission & Intent
- Staff Input
- METT-T
- Military Judgment



Commander's Situational Understanding

- Commander's Visualization

Initial Guidance

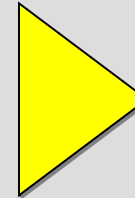
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Staff Orientation

- Mission Analysis

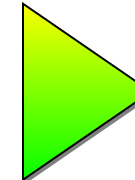
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Commander's Planning Guidance

- Deliberate Planning (COA DEV)

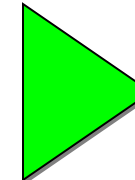
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Orders Development

- Execution

- Seeing/gaining an advantage
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Achieving a Decision



Achieving A Decision

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During Planning

- Mission Analysis
 - Continued learning to...
 - Deepen situational understanding
 - Identify advantage
 - Aid the commander's visualization
 - Results in a mission statement that...
 - Provides the context for COA DEV
 - Reveals vulnerabilities that are truly “critical”
 - Identifies resource shortfalls
 - How might I gain and/or improve my advantages?
 - Refine Commander's Intent and Guidance



Achieving A Decision

MSTP

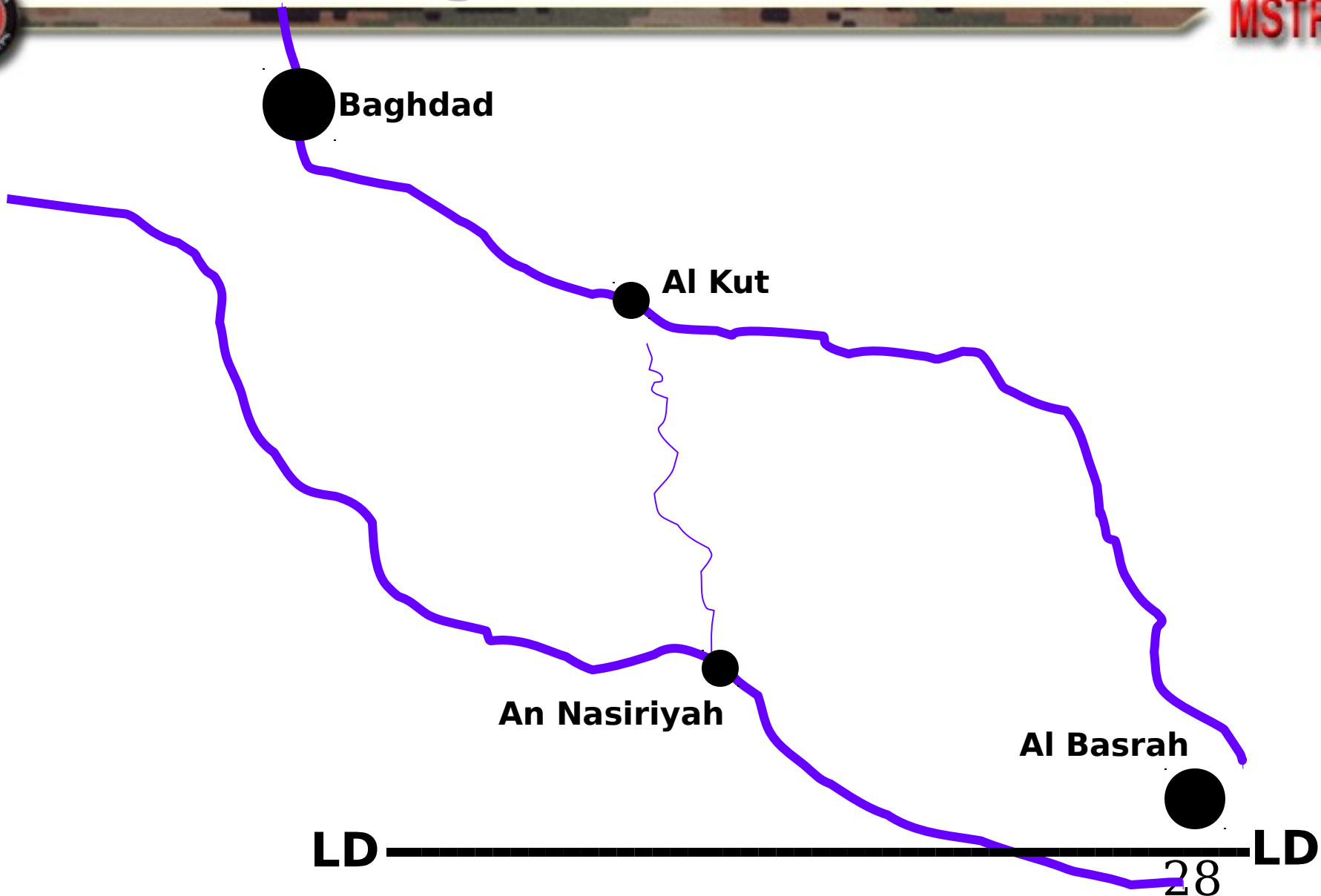
During Planning

- Commander's Planning Guidance
 - Bridges Mission Analysis and COA DEV
 - Must address decisive actions—the commander's bid for victory
 - All other guidance follows
 - Decisive Actions can be expressed by any combination of:
 - Events & Locations (sequencing)
 - Warfighting functions
 - Aiming points
 - Effects

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Commander's Planning Guidance



MSTP

- Threat vulnerabilities
- Risk
- Other restraints or constraints
- Decisive & shaping actions
- Main effort ID & CONOPS
- Types of operations
- Forms of maneuver
- Command Relationships
- Task organization
- Sequence of operations
- Timing
- Use of the reserve
- Evolution of the battlespace
- Mobility &

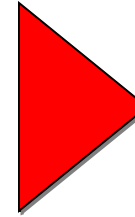
This list is not all inclusive...ty

Situational Understanding



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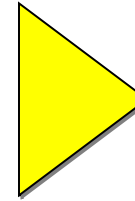
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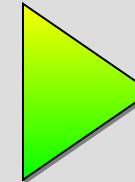
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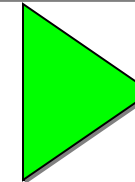
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MSTP

During Planning

- COA DEV
 - The OPTs functional translation of the commander's conceptual visions
 - COAs will vary by how Advantage is exploited
 - Should reflect the linkages among:
 - COG/CV-Decisive Actions-Main Effort
 - Shaping, Supporting, and Sustaining Actions
 - Decisive Actions – Exploitation – Pursuit
 - Decisive Actions – Effects



Achieving A Decision

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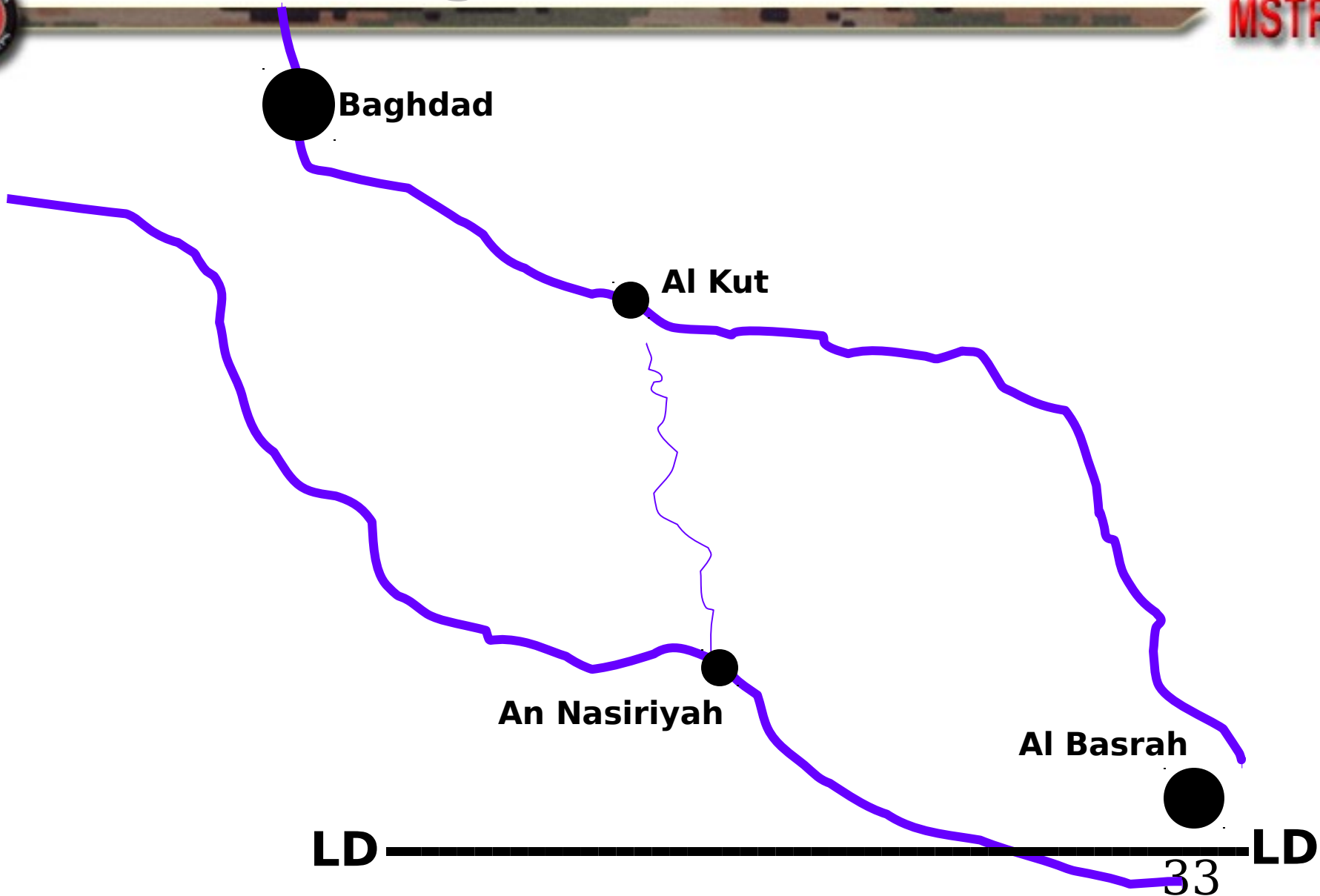
During Planning

- COA DEV
 - COAs are potential solutions to the problems identified in Mission Analysis
 - But solutions are not enough—COAs need to be the answers for achieving a decision
 - Winning is what matters and we do that by exploiting advantage

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MSTP

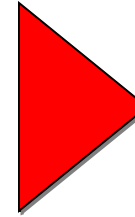


Situational Understanding



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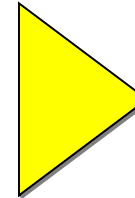
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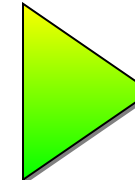
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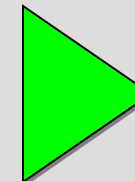
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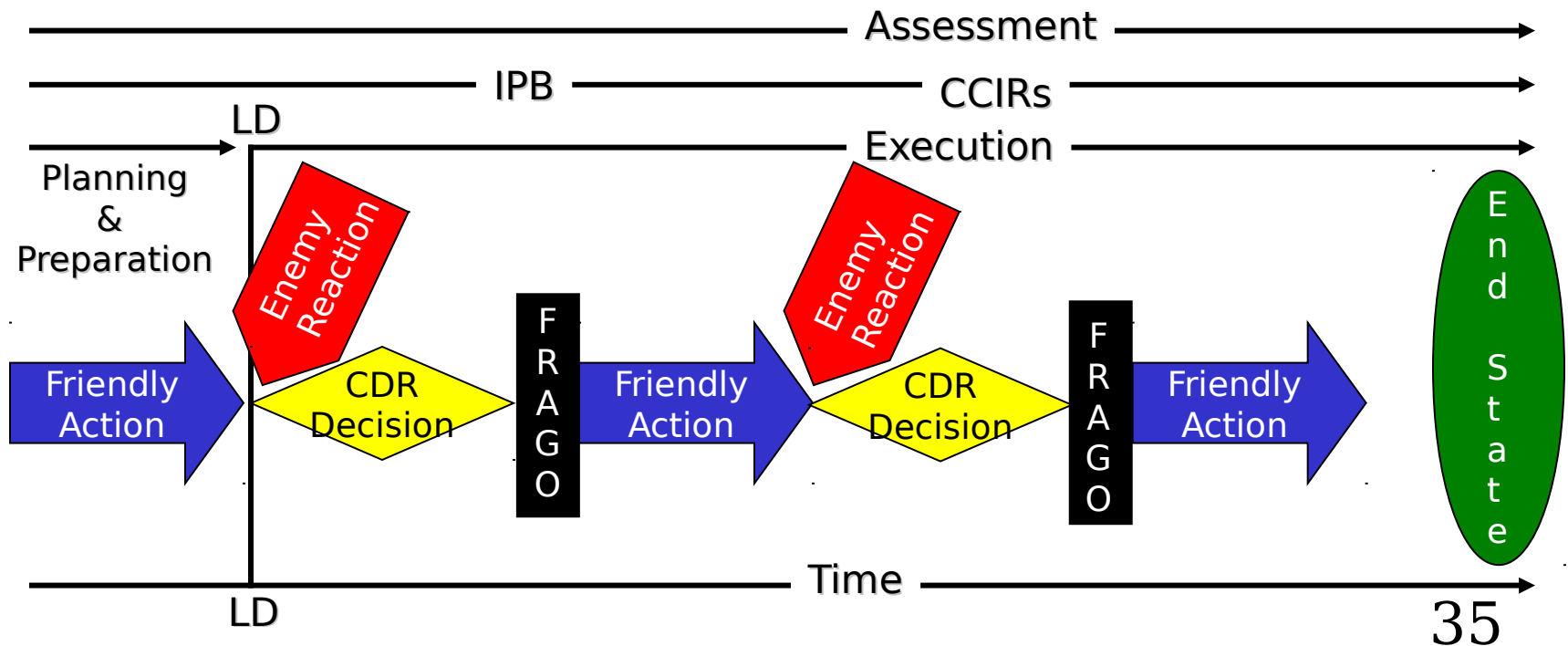
Achieving a
Decision



Achieving A Decision

During Execution

- Seeing/Gaining Advantage
- Adapting
- Tempo
- Exploiting success
- Achieving a Decision





The Anatomy of a Victory

MSTP

- METT-T Visualization – CBAE – Planning

- Execute tactical actions
 - Fires, maneuver, IO, ISR
 - Expose, develop CVs

“Shaping Actions”
Supporting Efforts

- Generate Advantages
 - Recognize advantage
 - Limit enemy options
 - Gain the initiative

Decisive

- Exploit Advantages
 - Attack CVs
 - Get inside the “system”
 - Tear it apart

“Decisive Action”
Main Effort

- Shatter Cohesion
 - Mental, moral, physical
 - Fleeing, pursuit

Decisive

Achieve a Decision
Desired Effects

- Finish
 - Get to endstate



Doctrinal “Bottom Line”

MSTP

The objective of tactics is to achieve military success through a decision in battle. In combat, the success the commander seeks is **victory**—not a partial or marginal outcome, but a **victory** that settles the issue in his favor and contributes to the success of the overall campaign

MCDP 1-0

Summary



MSTP

- Understand the **criticality** of the Commander's role throughout Planning and Execution
- Emphasize the importance of **Situational Understanding** and **Advantage** in achieving a decision
- Established the **linkage** between decisive, shaping, and sustaining actions in achieving a decision



Questions?
